

## **July 2012 Book Reviews**

### ***Chopsticks***

By Jessica Anthony

Seventeen-year-old Gloria Fleming is the piano prodigy daughter of Victor and Maria. After losing her mother at the age of ten, her father places very strict rules on her. Francisco Mendoza is a young artist who has just moved to the neighborhood and ends up sweeping Gloria off her feet with his drawings and romantic mix CDs. Then her father forces her to go on a European concert. While on tour strange things happen to Gloria. While in the middle of playing a classic composition she will unconsciously slip into playing a version of Chopsticks which reminds her of Francisco. After continuously slipping into Chopsticks her father eventually decides to bring her back home. Teetering on the edge of madness, Gloria must finally face the fact that she hasn't been entirely truthful to herself about her relationship with Frank. This romantic mystery is told entirely in images and pictures with very few words throughout the entire book. I was fascinated by this book the entire time I was reading it. Although it is a very simple book that is quick to read through it is for a more mature audience because of the topics it covers and some vulgar language. I would recommend this book for High School readers and any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***Al Capone Shines My Shoes***

By Gennifer Choldenko

This book is the sequel to *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. Most of the main characters are the same. Set in 1935 in Alcatraz. The main character and narrator is Moose Flanagan who lives on the island. Al Capone calls in a favor from Moose involving him in an escape plan (Capone was responsible for getting Moose's sister into a special school). This is a great book for reluctant readers-funny/fun. It is just as good as the first book. Middle School kids will relate to Moose and his problems. This book is recommended for any library collection and Middle School readers. It contains great life lessons and it was good to find out what happens to Moose and Natalie. The characters are believable- esp. Natalie (sister who is autistic). This is also an excellent book about Alcatraz.

Jennie Schneider

### ***Spot the Plot***

By J. Patrick Lewis

Set of 30 "poems" that contain riddles about books. It is kind of a "Name the Book" of familiar stories. The illustrations are engaging and definitely add to the story and give great clues. This is a good way to introduce riddles or just for fun—reminds me a little of crazy like a fox in the way that a genre is introduced. It is an excellent book. I will use it next year with my library classes. Students will enjoy trying to guess the solutions to the riddles. This book is recommended for elementary readers, grades 1-5, and for any library collection.

Jennie Schneider

### ***The Eternal Ones***

By Kristen Miller

Haven, who has always lived in Snope City, Tennessee, knows she needs to move to New York because Ethan is waiting for her. She has been having visions of a past life since she was a young girl. Now that she is almost 18 she is excited because she knows that Ethan is waiting for her. The problem is that once she finds him she has many questions. Is he really her true love or is Ethan the one who started the fire that killed her in her previous life? This book has an accelerated reader level of 5.2 and is recommended for 9<sup>th</sup> grade readers and up. This is a well written reincarnation that may have nonbelievers wondering about the possibilities.

Diane Limoges

**Wildwood**

By Colin Meloy

Prue's baby brother is stolen by crows while Prue is babysitting him forcing her, along with her friend Curtis to venture into the Impassable Wilderness. Legend has it that no one who goes into the Wilderness ever returns. Once in the woods they encounter Coyotes who walk on their hind legs, talk, and tote guns. The coyotes take Curtis and now Prue has to find him as well as her brother. Will they ever find their way to hope? This book is intended for readers between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. What a serious waste of paper. It goes beyond a fairytale to just plain stupid. Even if there was a good story line it is so drug out that young readers would be bored long before anything really happens.

Diane Limoges

**Delirium**

By Lauren Oliver

17-year-old Lena and her friend Hana are only a little over 3 months away from being cured from amour deliria nervosa, in layman's word, love. It has been determined years ago that love is a disease and a cure has been developed and all are required to receive the cure. The only problem is that the cure cannot be administered before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Lena can't wait to be saved from the disease where as her friend Hana is full of doubts. Alex however has never had the cure. He grew up in the out laying wilds and is considered an invalid. Now he has infected Lena. She realized there is so much out there that she will miss if she has the cure. This book has an accelerated reader of 6.1 and is written for readers 9<sup>th</sup> grade and up. Though well written the plot drags. Each time you think the story is finally going somewhere it begins to drag again with a lot of unnecessary details that are just filler on the pages to drag it out. The ending will keep you guessing so hopefully if you start you read to the end. This reader was tempted at many points to shelve it and move on to something with a little more plot.

Diane Limoges

**Lovetorn**

By Kavita Daswani

When Shalini's father gets a new job in L.A., she is torn from her life in India and the boy she's been engaged to since she was three. Starting life in a new and different city Shalini isn't sure she'll survive high school in Amerca without her fiancé, Vikram. She also has to learn to deal with her mom's homesickness and depression which wreaks havoc on the entire family. Finally Shalini becomes friends with Renuka an Indian girl who grew up in the US. Renuka helps Shalini find her way and encourages her to try new things which is why she eventually joins the Food4Life club at her school. While working on putting together a big fundraiser for her new club she meets Toby and develops a major crush on him. Shalini thinks she loves Vikram, but can't figure out why she never felt the same way around him as she does around Toby. Eventually she discovers that her heart ultimately has to make its own choices, even when it seems as if your destiny has already been chosen. This book is recommended for Jr. High and High School readers and any library collection. I definitely enjoyed reading this book. The author used quite a few Hindi terms throughout which are defined in a small glossary at the back of the book. While reading this book I felt like I was just love torn as Shalini did in the end when she had to make her decision. I feel like High School readers will be able to relate to Shalini's love life because of the similarities they may be going through in their own lives.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***When Dads Don't Grow Up***

By Marjorie Blain Parker

This book is a celebration of dads who embrace their inner child. Whether it be finding fun in popping bubble wrap, throwing stones in water, racing in shopping carts or wearing clothes that don't match, this book will show children that their dads enjoy these experiences as much as they do. This is a great book to share with young children and anybody else who has a soft spot for lovable, but goofy dads. I was picturing my dad the entire time I read this book which is the reason I picked it up in the first place. It would be a great book for dads to read with their children for bonding time. I recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Meet Me at the Moon***

By Gianna Marino

This book is about a momma elephant and her baby. Momma has to go away and climb the highest mountains to ask the skies for rain since it has been so dry. She leaves behind Little One, but tells her to meet her at the moon. While momma is gone, she finds comfort in looking at the moon. Eventually momma comes back after it has rained and the elephants are happily reunited. This is a great book for young children to help them if they are ever feeling homesick. This book is recommended any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Z is for Moose (That's ME!)***

By Kelly Bingham

This book starts off as a regular "A is for Apple" alphabet book, until Moose gets impatient for his turn and interrupts around the letter "D". Zebra, who is in charge of the book, yells at Moose, and tells him that he's on the wrong page. After Moose constantly interrupting the book Zebra is so fed up by the time it gets to the page for "M" that Zebra decides to go for Mouse instead of Moose. This makes Moose extremely upset to the point of tears. Zebra then tells Moose that he's sorry and that Moose can be in the book, but Moose says he can't, because it's too late. What kind of surprise do you think Zebra has planned for Moose? This is a cute book that can be used to help teach children about the importance of patience and also the value of being a good friend. This book is recommended for any young readers and for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Secret Agent Splat!***

By Rob Scotton

Splat the Cat is so proud of the ducks that his dad makes and even has a name for each and every duck. Soon Splat realizes that the ducks start disappearing and then reappearing the next day without their beaks. Splat develops a plan to discover who is borrowing the ducks and he decides that he is a Secret Agent. Will Splat ever find out who has been snitching the ducks from the garden shed? This is another great addition to the Splat the Cat books. Splat is up to his usual act in this book. A great book for readers in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and up, they will have fun solving the mystery. This book is recommended for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***The Princess and the Pig***

By Jonathan Emmett

Can a Pig really become a Princess? Well, in this book yes, a pig can really become a princess, sort of. This book is about Pigmella and Priscilla who were comically switched at birth. When the farmer and his wife realize what had happened and try to return the rightful princess in return for their pig, the king and queen insisted that it was a trick because "it's the sort of thing that happens all the time in books". Things end up happily ever after for everyone in the story, except maybe the prince. I absolutely loved this book and how it incorporated so many traditional fairy tales in it. Readers will enjoy comparing the traditional tales that they have heard to the parts in this story. Many lessons can also be learned from this story. This book is recommended for any library collection. I am hoping to add this book to my own personal library and encourage everyone else to do the same.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***Ladybug Girl and the Bug Squad***

By David Soman

This is a sequel in the "Ladybug Girl" series. This story introduces Ladybug Girl's friends as they come for a playdate at her house. Ladybug Girl is excited to do things EXACTLY the way she planned, but learns, in the end, that being a good friend might mean being flexible and considering others sometimes. It's a fun story, with an applicable lessons and colorful illustrations. Sure to be a hit with preschool through early elementary students in any collection. Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

### ***Petunia Goes Wild***

By Paul Schmid

This is a very simple story of a girl who wants to be a tiger but her parents really aren't cooperating. In the end she decides not to mail herself to the jungle, but to enjoy the place she's at...with a few trips via imagination. This is a great book for preschoolers with simple text and simple illustrations and a straightforward story. Older readers would probably find the story lacking. Would be fine in a public collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

### ***Amelia Bedelia, Rocket Scientist?***

By Herman Parish

This is a typical Amelia Bedelia story with lots of misunderstandings of multiple meaning words. In this book, Amelia helps with a science fair but kind of makes a mess of things, as usual. The reading level is about 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and it would be good for that age. Younger kids might miss the funny plays on words and then the story is hard to follow. Recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

### ***A Sick Day for Amos McGee***

By Philip C. Stead

This is a funny story about faithful Amos who gets up each day to spend time with his animal friends at the zoo. When he gets sick, the animals decide to come to him. It's a sweet story of friendship with lovely illustrations and easy text. Recommended for preschool through early elementary, this would be good in any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

### ***Just One Bite***

By Lola Schaefer

This is a great book about different animals and what and how much they eat. The illustrations are simple but fun and the last page is filled with lots of info that the simple text doesn't give. This does have extra big, fold up pages, so it could be easily torn as part of a library collection unless it's reinforced. This book is recommended for early elementary students and any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Too Princessy!***

By Jean Reidy

This is a fun, rhyming book about a little “princess” who is too picky for her own good, but her pickiness leads the reader on quite an adventure full of real and fun made up words. The text is very simple and the illustrations make the book and story work. Recommended for preschool and kindergarten kids, it would be a fun addition to any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***You Are a Lion! And Other Fun Yoga Poses***

By Tae-eun Yoo

This book helps describes simple yoga poses that kids can easily learn how to do. The book is written in a kind of poem form that makes it easy to understand and flows nicely from one pose to another. It would be a great book to use during a Healthy Living unit in the classroom. This book is recommended for elementary readers and any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Pugs In a Bug***

By Crolyn Crimi

Six pudgy pugs go on a road trip in their friends bug. Along the road they discover many different things and get to have a variety of different experiences such as joining in a parade and chasing a squirrel. The book has a repetitious feeling to it which would make it a great book for beginning readers. The illustrations are colorful and entertaining to look at and would definitely grab the reader's attention. I would recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Sophie's Fish***

By A. E. Cannon

Jake has agreed to babysit his friend Sophie's fish Yo-Yo for the weekend. But he starts to panic when Sophie is on her way over to drop off her fish. Jake doesn't know the first things about babysitting a fish. He's afraid the fish will want to do something and he won't know what to do. Just before Sophie arrives Jake has completely talked himself out of babysitting the fish. When Sophie is finally there he realizes that maybe taking care of the fish won't be so bad. This is a cute book. The book addresses real ideas kids might have about taking care of a fish and puts a funny spin on it. The illustrations are creative and inviting. I would recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***What Little Boys Are Made Of***

By Robert Neubecker

Written in a pattern, this book describes all the games and activities little boys like to participate in. This would be a good book for readers from Kindergarten on up to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I would recommend this book as an addition to any library.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Puzzled by Pink***

By Sarah Frances Hardy

Izzy and Rose are sisters with one big difference. Izzy hates pink while Rose is obsessed with pink. Rose is getting ready for her all-pink birthday party but Izzy refuses to come and decides to plan her own spooky party in the attic. When Rose comes up with pink cupcakes to share with her sister, they get in a fight over Rose's magic wand and end up creating a dragon. The dragon helps Rose and Izzy resolve their differences in opinion and adds some spice to the party. This was an okay book to read. It might be good to use in the classroom when teaching about difference, but I know there are some better ones out there. I would recommend this book for personal library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Ballerina Swan***

By Allegra Kent

Sophie wanted to be a great ballerina dancer like the ones she watched through the window of Madam Myrtle's Dance Studio. The only problem is that Sophie is a swan. Sophie keeps trying to join in, but Madam Myrtle will not let a swan join her class. It isn't until a new teacher, whose name is Miss Willow, begins teaching, that Sophie is finally given her chance to shine. This is a great book to read to kids to help them learn that they can be whatever they want to be, no matter what obstacles they might face, they just need to keep trying. I definitely would recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***So You Want to Be a Rock Star***

By Audrey Vernick

This book is a creative and fun way to help kids pretend to be a Rock Star. Guiding readers step by step, at the end of the book you will feel like you really are a Rock Star (or at least you'll feel good about pretending). While the illustrations are cute and the idea behind the book is neat, I felt like it got a little too long towards the end. However, kids may feel like the book isn't long enough. I would recommend this book for any inspiring Rock Star reader out there and any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Amelia Bedelia's First Vote***

By Herman Parish

This is yet another addition to the Amelia Bedelia legacy. In this book Amelia Bedelia learns about how the election process works in the United States. This would be a good book to include in a unit on government, especially the part about elections. It wouldn't be an Amelia Bedelia book without her quirky interpretations on what the people around her are saying. This book is definitely a great addition for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***The Hueys in The New Sweater***

By Oliver Jeffers

Hueys are known for being all the same, until one of them knitted a sweater. Now all of the Hueys want to differ by wearing a sweater. This would be a good book to use to help children understand that what makes them different is also what makes them special. I would definitely recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Moo Hoo***

By Candace Ryan

Cow and Owl are the best of friends who do everything together. Then a new friend, Kangaroo, comes along and Cow and Owl are unsure of what to do. This would be a great book to use when teaching children about the importance of acceptance and friendship. This book is recommended for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Chico the Brave***

By Dave Horowitz

Little Chico is afraid of everything. To help his son feel braver his father tells him a story of "The Golden Chicken" that frightens away everything evil. Chico decides to go on a quest to meet this so called "Golden Chicken". However, instead of finding the mythical hero from his dad's story, he realizes his own potential and ends up saving his own town from the big bad gang of llamas. This is an inspiring tale about a new hero, who finds the courage to soar. It is a great book to help children learn about their own potential. This book is recommended for elementary readers and any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Ladybug Girl and Bingo***

By David Soman

Ladybug Girl and her family go camping for the very first time and she is responsible for keeping a hold on the leash for her dog, Bingo. Everything is fine until Bingo gets loose and runs off to explore the forest by himself. This is a job for Ladybug Girl. This is another great addition to the Ladybug Girl series. Children will enjoy reading about Ladybug Girl and her new adventures in the forest. This book would be a wonderful addition for any library collection and a great book for young readers.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Something To Do***

By David Lucas

This is a pretty simple book about two bears who are trying to find something to do in the middle of nothing. They come across a stick and start creating things around them. This would be a great book to use to motivate kids to use their imaginations. I would recommend this book for any library.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

***Dog In Charge***

By K. L. Going

Dog is very obedient. He can sit, he can stay, and he can even dance. So when the family leaves they put him in charge of the five cats in the house. Dog tries to keep the cats in line by using the same commands his owners use on him, but they only seem to cause trouble and make a mess. Poor Dog doesn't know what to do and before he can fix anything, he falls asleep. The cats love Dog so much that they cleaned up their messes all around the house so it was nice and clean when the family showed up. Children will enjoy reading this book. Every picture with the cats has a sentence that allows you to count the cats in the picture along with the story line. This repetition is great for young readers. This book would make a great addition to any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***Lulu's Magic Wand***

By Chuck Richards

The time has come for Lulu Winklewig and her family to visit Adventure Planet. Everything is going well until Lulu makes them stop at one of the game booths because of the Priscilla the Fairy Piglet prize hanging from the roof. Lulu wants Priscilla but her dad is unable to win it for her and all she gets as a prize is a duplicate of Priscilla's wand. Little does Lulu (and the wizard at the booth) know, the wand Lulu has is the wizard's real wand and not a plastic wand. What will become of Adventure Planet if no one is able to get the wand away from Lulu? This book is great for upper elementary readers and would be an excellent addition to any library collection. The illustrations are fun and inviting and the readers will have fun using their imagination throughout the story.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***Owlet's First Flight***

By Mitra Modarressi

This book is the story of Owlet's first flight through the night. At first he is a little scared, but he eventually finds out that it's fun to fly around in the night sky. This would be a great book to show kids that it's okay to be scared and take a risk. This book would be good for grades Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. I would recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***Birdy's Smile Book***

By Laurie Keller

Birdy is obsessed with smiles. She believes that the first person you see each day should look happy to see you, which is why she smiles at herself every morning. Birdy knows that smiles are easy to pass on from one person to another. She also knows that you can smile while doing just about anything, even eating broccoli. This is a great book for kids of any age and would be a great addition to any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***Dini Dinosaur***

By Karen Beaumont

This is a cute book about a little dinosaur who is getting ready for bed after a full day of playing in the mud. Every time Dini Dinosaur tries to wash himself he finds out that he has forgotten to take something off. This book follows a pattern the entire way through which would make it a great read aloud for kids in Preschool or Kindergarten. I would recommend this book for any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student

### ***The Art of Miss Chew***

By Patricia Polacco

This is the personal story about Patricia Polacco, her love of art and the importance a teacher can have in the life of a child. Patricia struggled in school because of her slow reading speed. Eventually her teacher allowed her more time on her tests and also suggested taking outside art classes to build on the talents she already possessed. At her art classes, Patricia encountered Miss Chew, the art teacher. Miss Chew noticed that Patricia looked at things different which was why she was such a slow reader. This was an important discovery when her substitute teacher, Mrs. Spaulding, wanted to take her out of her art classes. Thankfully Mr. Donovan returned just in time to keep Patricia in her art classes and became a featured artist in the Spring Art Show. I found this story to be very moving and inspiring. It would be a great book to use when encouraging students to follow their desires and to not let anyone stop them from doing what they truly love. This book would be good for students from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade on up and would make a great addition to any library collection.

Marisa Sieler, WSC Student



***Seababy: A Little Otter Returns Home***

By Ellen Levine

This is a true story of a baby otter who is rescued, kept in captivity long enough for his adopted mama otter to teach him the tools of the trade, and sent back out to his ocean home. The illustrations are beautiful, the text is engaging and the real life rescue story will captivate early elementary students and would be a wonderful addition to any collection. The rest of the story about how scientists had to learn how to help baby otters by trial and error is at the back, which is a great addition.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***The Amazing Adventures of Bumblebee Boy***

By David Soman

This is one of the "Ladybug Girl" books, so there are plenty of imaginative adventures, but a real life scenario, too, of learning to deal kindly and include younger siblings. It's a great book for preschool and elementary "superheroes in the making" who could readily apply this lesson. They would also enjoy the adorable illustrations and good readers could probably read this book themselves. Recommended for any collection.

Heather Reid, home school parent, Omaha, NE

***Hank the Cowdog: The Disappearance of Drover***

By John R. Erickson

After a harrowing experience with a badger, Hank the Cowdog and his sidekick Drover, hop in the back of Slim's pickup to catch a good night's rest. When morning arrives, they find the truck traveling to town with Slim unaware they are in the back of the truck. On the way to the auction barn, they end up in the parade welcoming the town's championship basketball team. Slim commands them to stay in the truck but after a short nap, Hank finds Drover gone and sets off to find him. After an adventure with other dogs and an escape from the dog catcher, Hank finds his way back to the auction barn only to see Drover sleeping under the truck.

This book is recommended for grades 2-4. I also believe any library might find this a good book to add. If you are aware of the *Hank the Cowdog* series you will know how fun these are.

Hank's mishaps are fun to read.

Deb Daehnke

***Pandora Gets Lazy***

By Carolyn Hennesy

I could not get into the book. It seemed that trying to connect the message of the book to the characters of mythology was quite a stretch. It looks like there is a series of books by this author which are written in the same way, maybe it was just my mood but I tried to pick the book up and read for longer periods of time. I even started it over thinking I had missed something. I would not suggest the book to a young adult or preteen.

Kathy Muller

***Wolf Storm***

By Dee Garretson

Stefan wins a role in a sci-fi film which is his first acting job. It's a great location, cute girl, spaceship props and trained wolves as part of the cast. This all points to being a dream job for Stefan. Then he finds the girl is a snob, acting is much harder than he thought it would be and a massive snowstorm blankets the region. Through a series of mishaps on the set and at the mountain lodge they are staying, Stefan and the other two young co-stars are stranded with one of the elder actors at the lodge. When an avalanche destroys the lodge and parts of the movie set, they are left even more desperate with starving wild wolves preying around the outskirts.

This book is recommended for grades 5-8. I also believe any library might find this a good book to add. This was an enjoyable book with suspense, trained wolves as characters, an intriguing movie setting, and an adventure when Stefan and the other young characters must rely on each other to survive the wild wolves and the avalanche. This story might engross reluctant readers.

It was an easy read with enough suspense to capture their attention. Deb Daehnke